

Walking Meditation Guide

by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

Walking meditation has two purposes: walking meditation for samatha (concentration) and for vipassana (insight - wisdom meditation). This explanation concentrates on the later. However, the technique of how to walk is the same for both.

Primary Stage



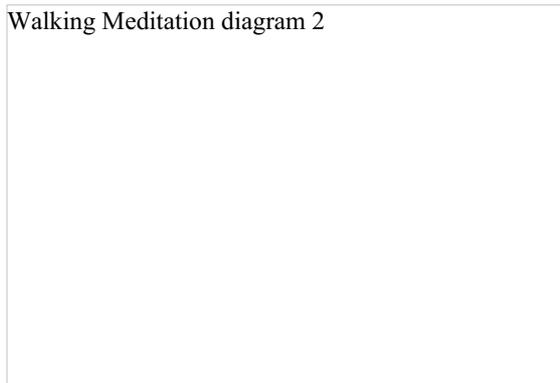
Stepping Right/Left

Step 1 Awareness of stepping forward on the right foot (stepping right) and then stepping forward on the left foot (stepping left).

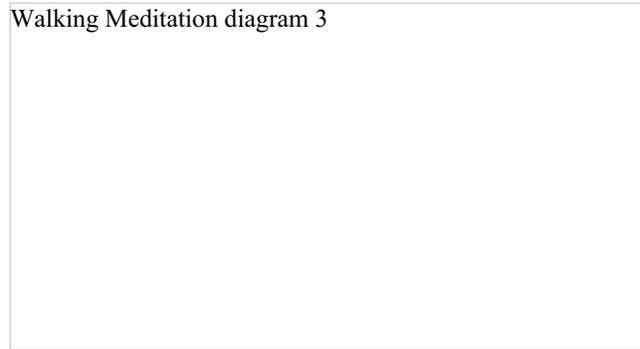
Step 2 Awareness on rising right/left, pushing right/left and placing right/left

Intermediate Stage

Walking Meditation diagram 2

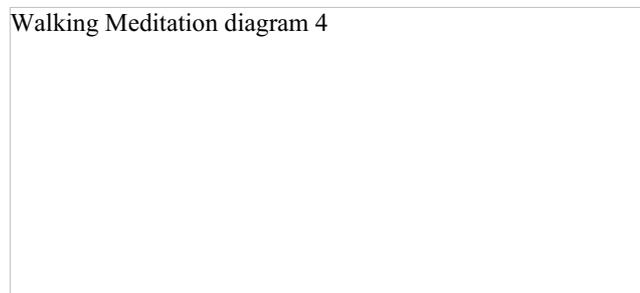


Step 1 Awareness on lifting (the heel), pushing, dropping, and touching

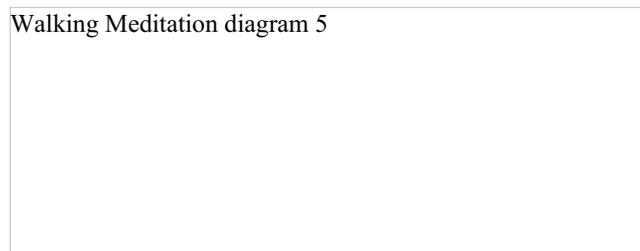


Step 2 Awareness on lifting (the heel), raising (the leg), pushing, dropping, and placing

Advanced Stage



Step 1 Awareness on raising, lifting (the leg), pushing, dropping, touching, and pressing



Step 2 Awareness on raising (the heel), lifting (the leg), pushing, dropping, touching the floor, placing, and pressing

Before changing postures to the next steps, the practitioners should skilfully practise each stage. Why are there many steps? Each stage manifests in the mind. If the practitioners can practise the intermediate and advanced stage, they become subtle mind and calm mind. They, then, can see all of the process of walking. The practitioners, therefore, should walk slowly and mindfully. Beginners should follow the primary stage until they are more skillful.

A. Walking Meditation Technique for Samatha

The key exercise is mindfulness in walking. The purpose of walking in many steps is to prevent thought or stop thinking and calming the mind. Whenever practitioners reach the one-pointedness meditation, they should stop and let it go naturally.

B. Walking Meditation for Vipassana

A way of walking meditation for vipassana is the same as the Walking Meditation for Samatha. For the beginner

they should practise the primarily stage until they are skilful in walking. The purpose of walking meditation for vipassana is to develop wisdom. Below are some techniques to develop wisdom.

The practitioners should keep in mind that walking is a working process involving rupa and nama. Practitioners are aware of walking by contemplating and investigating what is rupa and nama all the time.

Rupa = walking movements

Nama = consciousness of walking; occurrence of feeling (pain, happy, unhappiness, etc.); perception on how to walk along the meditation path; and thinking happens during walking.

Practitioners investigate them until their minds accept this fact. They see themselves as a working process of rupa and nama. Then, they move to the next stage.

Rising and vanishing of rupa and nama during walking. At this stage, the practitioners can see nama and rupa as rising and vanishing all the time. They must observe arising and vanishing of nama and rupa continuously for some period of time. Then, they practise in the next stage.

Impermanent state (aniccam). When practitioners observe the arising and vanishing of nama and rupa, they then observe nama and rupa as impermanence. It is rather easy for one who had realised the state of nama and rupa before. They know that rupa and nama arise, survive for a moment and vanish at the end and are therefore regarded as impermanent. The practitioners see this truth until it is deeply accepted in their heart while walking along a path in meditation. Afterwards they move to the next stage.

Non-Self state (anattā). When practitioners realize the impermanent state, they then further contemplate the non-self state. In this last state, they realise the impermanent state of rupa (physical phenomena) and nama (mental phenomena) as impermanence. Also, impermanence is regarded as non-self. Thus, they see the body that we assumed as “person”, “self”, or “I”, as non-self. At this stage, it is easy for those who attained the past stages to investigate the non-self state of things. The practitioners investigate the impermanent state as a non-self state of things until it is deeply accepted in their minds while walking along the path in meditation. They then move to the next stage.

Fading away, cessation and relinquishment. When the practitioners realize the non-self state, they continue to practise. They may hold the Non-Self state lightly leading to fading away, ceasing and relinquishing. At this point, it may be said that the mind has reached a state of equanimity in rupa and nama (the Five Aggregates) in the world. Some defilements can be eradicated at this stage. They become a noble one.

To sum up, when practitioners realize rupa-nama, impermanence, not-self, fading away, cessation, and relinquishment, whether sitting or walking they can see these states all the time. The meditation for enlightenment is going on by itself both day and night. Their path goes forth to nibbana.

Source : <http://www.knowbuddhism.info/2009/02/walking-meditation-buddhadasa-bhikkhus.html>